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Chapter Two Reflection

February 3, 2015

Chapter two, which is titled “A Culture of Fear,” brought a few points to mind that I enjoyed. I like how Dr. Palmer talked about the fear that both the teacher and student feel when it comes to education. He talked about the sense of vulnerability that one feels when standing and opening up in front of a group of people. This made me think about how I could potentially feel and the fears I may experience. One of my biggest fears is that I will not be prepared enough or that I will teach the class the wrong concept. To counter act this fear, I feel that I will come over prepared, which may overwhelm students as well. This overwhelming feeling could be caused by not only my expectations, but the amount of information and knowledge I expect them to possess.

Further into the chapter two, I really enjoyed Palmer’s reference to the days when he was a student and the feelings of failure he experienced. Dr. Palmer stated, “I should have remembered from my own experience that students, too, are afraid: afraid of failing, of not understanding, of being drawn into issues they would rather avoid, of having their ignorance exposed or their prejudices challenged, of looking foolish in front of their peers.” (Pg 37. 3rd para.) This was a rather long statement, but Dr. Palmer could not have stated fear as a student any clearer. When I was a student I was always scared of peer-to-peer judgment. Likewise, I always felt that I was not smart enough and that I would never be able to succeed. It was not ‘cool’ to be the smart kid in high school. The kids that were perceived as ‘cool’ were the kids that did not do well. I would say that this idea of thinking took place mostly through middle school and freshman year of high school. This generalized idea of being ‘cool’ changed drastically to success goals. As I grew older and advanced in my high school education, the students who were smart were well recognized. This caused jealousy and motivation for most students to live out career orientated lifestyles. Looking back, I still think it is crazy that this idea ever existed. Furthermore, later into my junior and senior years of high school I began to consider college. I did not obtain the ideal standardized test score and that made me always worry if I would ever be capable of being a college graduate. Four years later I am closer than ever and I cannot believe I have made it this far. The fear of failure still exist, but it now has been over shadowed by my preparation and enjoyment in my subject field.